

Murray Arts Advisory Board  
Minutes for October 20, 2009

Attendance: Mildred Horton, John Madsen, Elaine Judd, Jen Davies, Judy Baxendale, Jared Shaver, Kathleen Sorenson, Sharon Whitney, Mary Black, Mary Ann Kirk.

Visitors: Ken and Clarissa Andersen (Murray Symphony), Rod Andreason (Friends of the Murray Center for the Performing Arts), Raquel Davis, Raelyn and Jason (Stage Right), Sarah Noal, Dimitri, Sergeyeovich Cherynshev, (U of U), Doug Hill

1. Minutes for September 15, 2009 were approved. Meeting schedule for 2010 was reviewed. All 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 7 pm work fine with no meeting in December.

2. Staff Report

. Steve James assemblies are going well. Most had about 25 - 30 % student attendance at the evening performance with 150-300 parents at each. The students have loved the experience. Viewmont had the smallest attendance which was lower.

. Photography exhibit is also going well. We are providing docents for all 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in Murray School District.

. Literary winners will be contacted by Judy, Kathleen, Jen and Sharon.

. Art exhibit is set for November 4 from 7 to 8:30 pm.

. Award presentations are set for November 7 at 7:30 pm at the band concert. We are presenting to senior patrons, Mary Hadfield and Luella Finlinson who have attended our performances for several decades. The board suggested flowers and a permanent gift or plaque saying patron of the arts.

. The city has purchased an army building near the park property. The building needs remodeling to make it useable and the city does not have any money to do that at the moment. The city is looking at it as possible multi use community space in the future but does not have any money to do that this year. The symphony cannot fit in the music room at Cottonwood High anymore and they need space for their music and large instruments. The band is having trouble paying for the increased rates at Murray High although the district adjusted the fee for them after we discussed the issue with them. Mary Ann noted the city is not sure about providing space for storage but this is a critical need for these groups.

Jared asked how we can have a stronger voice in what happens to the facility. Doug said they have heard interest for batting cages, skate facility, and a dog park. Mary Ann has talked about the need for rehearsal and storage space. He said a recommendation from the board would be considered. Jared recommends we approach the city about finding a donor to help although this could conflict with donations for an art center. Mary Ann said

there may be an option to use CDBG funds. Mildred noted that if the city bought it, they would want to use it for something. She thought a multi-use community facility room made more sense than batting cages. Mary Ann asked if it helps to have a formal letter from the board. Doug said that would be fine if they felt strongly about it. Mildred suggested we put this on next month's agenda.

3. Hillcrest mini grant request came in for a \$125 to pay for clay for a sculpture project in November for the Spanish classes for the next two years. Mary Ann explained our current policy requires a cash match and prefers grants that provide material that helps sustain a program long term. Board members agreed that every school has yearly supply needs and we don't have the money for that. John thought this type of material can usually be obtained through the school itself. Jared suggested a mini grant should be focused on emergency situations. Mary Ann asked if this is an emergency. Board members didn't think it was an emergency and suggested we consider this request in our normal review process.
4. Mary Ann explained the various components of our proposed arts facility. She discussed three potential sites including the park, downtown Murray, and Hillcrest Jr High. We have met multiple times with local organizations and this design basically meets those needs. The configuration could be changed depending on the footprint of the building. The county has recommended an additional black box. Our current design does not include commercial space which could be added if this facility was located in downtown Murray to help fund the facility. She wants local groups to give feedback if anything is missing, how much they would use the facility including storage needs if they use this exclusively for rehearsals and performances, and how much they are willing to pay for use. This facility will not be free.
5. Stage Right is homeless and would like something more permanent. They do four shows a year in a smaller space but may work into a larger theater. The symphony especially needs storage space for instruments and music which is currently stored in homes and trailers. Rod said the foundation has been organized to drive the efforts to get this facility built by spearheading the fundraising efforts so that the arts can have a permanent home year round. They are working with the city and the county as well. Mildred thanked them for their efforts. Members from the Sugar Factory also attended because they are looking at building a facility in South Jordan.

Elaine asked how much storage space is needed. Groups suggested music stands, cabinets for music library, and large instruments. They have to load this in and out from a trailer for performances. Ken said they have one of the largest symphony libraries in the state.

6. Sarah explained a team of business students have been working on a plan that could help this facility operate in the black. They have created a financial model that will allow the city to explore how the financial base will change in different situations.

Jared asked where the research information has come from. Sarah said it has come from the Utah based theaters. Sarah found that Rose Wagner provided a good baseline of information. Salt Lake City Library retail space is a valuable opportunity to offset costs. They keep the retail fees low and include utility costs so they can choose which groups they want to come in. Sarah felt a State Street facility location could charge more for retail space.

The team used a business tool that can give a quick overview of a company. This allows the board to review the arts as its own company.

Assets:	well organized art groups a supportive community many volunteers that help offset the cost of staffing demand is heavy from both within and outside of the city Leeds building will reduce the energy costs (25% savings)
Weaknesses:	costs of Murray's own productions versus low ticket prices initial building and startup costs
Opportunities:	encourages walking city use by surrounding communities high need for community rooms with significant revenue potential
Threat	saturation point of patrons

Some suggested attendance can actually increase. Judy said population is growing. Jared suggested the more the theater fills, the more the community benefits. Other businesses will want to be located nearby. Location is important. Mary suggested that because Murray is the center of the valley, many will come here versus going downtown or the U of U. She also felt that parking is important. Sarah agreed it has great potential in the downtown area.

A financial model was designed for the arts group to play with over the next few months. Dmitri explained the model with projected revenues and expenses. The model includes some assumptions based on marketing research provided by the consultants hired from Salt Lake County. They have tried to support each number with information provided by the research and local arts groups. The facility space is subject to change. Sarah recommended that the facility include multiple small black box studio theaters because of the demand.

Dmitri reviewed the facility space which is based on a combination of both Murray and Salt Lake County recommendations. The retail space would be located on the main floor facing State. Some were concerned that 2000 feet extra storage was small. Elaine wasn't sure that storage space should be rented. Jared suggested that space can be found that isn't necessarily designated as storage space. The symphony representatives asked if this facility addresses growth. It was noted that the stage size will be set. The number of seats was questioned. Should we provide bigger shows that draw a larger audience. Jared said we have been focused on our local art groups which this facility will

accommodate. If our local groups use this facility for about 75 days in a year, we should consider who would use the facility the other 225 days a year. Jared said that the arts board has also talked to other local communities who think that the 500 seats will meet their needs. Jared noted that many people think a Broadway theater must be large when it actually should be small and intimate. Broadway theaters in New York are relatively small. Mildred said we don't want a huge facility that makes it feel like no one is in attendance. The symphony wants to make sure it can accommodate a large symphony and a chorus with wing space. Jared said it is designed to do that.

There were many questions about how the facility would be used and coordinated between rehearsals and performances. Sarah projected a low ticket price. Jared thought these prices could be higher for an inside facility. Sarah suggested the ticket price can be adjusted as needed to cover expenses. The model was reviewed with basic assumptions to come up with projected use and potential revenue for each space (storage, retail, performance and rehearsal space, and community rooms. Suggested rates were provided for non-profits and commercial rental with maximum and expected revenue amounts.

The staffing expenses reflected a small part time staff with many volunteers from other groups using the facility. Sarah suggested the facility have a full time facility manager and tech director. Jared suggested the building cleaning could be contracted. Projected facility utilities were derived from actual figures from other operating facilities adjusted for LEEDS discounts.

Ticket revenue was based on average attendance. Dmitri noted that the model did not include the cost of Murray shows. He said that Murray typically didn't cover the full cost of shows with ticket revenues because the ticket prices were lower and sometimes audiences were smaller. (Note: costs of shows produced by Murray that don't break even are usually covered by grants).

The consultants suggested the board review this and add more detail where possible. The consultants would then like to come up with a few specific scenarios to make another presentation to city leaders. Doug said a presentation is going to be made in December to talk about the progress for the downtown area. The city is still struggling with how to fund a facility which the county suggests is over \$30 million. He is encouraged with the plan. He said he doesn't think it is hard to convince people of the need but how to financially make it happen. He thinks that the meeting in December is the time to attend and express support. Mildred asked when we could present the information from this model. Doug will work with Mary Ann and can get this scheduled with the city council as part of a committee of the whole.

Representatives from the Sugar Factory expressed optimism about the plan. Representatives from Stage Right commended Murray for its commitment to the arts. They prefer a little theater that creates intimacy.